

## U. S. PROSPERITY CLIMBS STEADILY

Federal Reserve Reports Show Record Activity in Many Centres.

## WAGES HIGHER; LABOR SCARCER

Railroads Taxed Beyond Capacity West and Northwest—Auto Builders Busy.

Washington, March 1. Generally good business conditions throughout the country are reflected in reports of Federal Reserve agents made public to-night by the Federal Reserve Board. The Boston district reports trade generally in continued activity, with the uncertainty as to the European situation restraining undue expansion. Largest of labor and increasing cost of raw materials, however, are said to be disturbing factors.

From New York comes the report that the industrial activity there is of record character. Manufacturers of automobiles, tools and fire arms and the rolling mills show the greatest increases in production. On account of scarcity of raw materials, however, some houses anticipate a shortage in merchandise stocks.

Steady and substantial gain throughout the Philadelphia district in practically all lines of business is announced.

General advances in wages and a shortage of labor are features of the trade situation in the Cleveland district. The labor shortage is said to be regarded as critical in several industries.

The Richmond report describes conditions throughout that district as good, and points to railroad construction, increased manufacturing and new credits extended in back up the statement. Although February is said to be usually a quiet month in the Atlanta district, the report says there has been "very little lessening" of business activity.

Scarcity of unnamed basic raw materials, the Chicago agent says, are receiving the earnest attention of manufacturing industries dependent on them. Reports from the farming section of the district indicate a reduced wheat acreage. The automobile industry is at a record pace, and there is a strong demand for livestock. St. Louis reports a degree of prosper-

perity unknown for several years, but with manufacturers reporting an increase in the cost of raw materials. Cold weather has retarded grain shipments in the Minneapolis district and to a considerable extent the lumber and wholesale businesses. Car shortage, the report says, is causing difficulties.

Kansas City reports railroads taxed beyond capacity owing largely to shipments of last year's grain. Conditions in Mexico, the Dallas districts reports, have stimulated business in the western section. The weather has damaged the winter crop, and there is said to be a probability that this will lead to an increase of the cotton acreage over that of last year, unless active steps are taken to prevent such an increase.

Imports through San Francisco for January exceeded all previous records by \$13,000,000. Seventy per cent of this was raw silk and wool.

## SAYS HE SOLD HER \$400 RINGS FOR \$750

Woman Suing Detective Declares She Fed and Clothed Him Free.

Detective Sergeant Bernard Pfister was arrested yesterday at Police Headquarters by Deputy Sheriff Neilson, in a breach of promise suit brought by Miss Cecelia Laszlo, of 323 East Seventy-ninth Street, who demands \$20,000 damages. He was released in \$1,000 bonds.

Miss Laszlo alleges that in the purchase of several rings, which she says Pfister told her she would have to wear to make herself presentable, he charged her \$750. She later discovered, she declared, that they were worth more than \$400.

The alleged promise of marriage was made on July 5, 1914, according to Miss Laszlo, and shortly thereafter Pfister went to live in the same house with her. She said she fed, clothed and lodged him without a dollar of remuneration.

"He never bought me anything," declares Miss Laszlo. "I bought overcoats for him, I bought shoes for him, silk stockings and underwear, and he never even spent a dollar."

Miss Laszlo alleges that her marriage to Pfister was fixed for about August 10, 1915. Before that date, she says, he repudiated his promise to marry her.

## PROPHESIES ELECTRIC CHAIR

Judge Tells Burglar, "You Are Likely to Wind Up There."

"You are one of the men who are likely to wind up in the electric chair," This prophecy and a sentence of ten years to state's prison for burglary were given Frederick Lawson, thirty-five, of 110 West 120th Street, by Judge Gibbs, in The Bronx County Court, yesterday.

The prisoner, under various aliases, has already spent four terms in the penitentiary. His last crime was a burglary in the home of Frederick A. Lowe, 111 Washington Avenue, The Bronx. Mr. Lowe caught him as he was fleeing with jewelry.

## \$1,250,000 REPAYED IN BILLARD DEAL

New Haven Accepts Settlement for Mysterious \$2,700,000 Transaction.

## MELLEN, DEFENDANT, DENIES CONTRIBUTING

Cash Payment Relieves Robbins, Hemingway and Others of Liability.

Payment of \$1,250,000 in cash was accepted yesterday by the new administration of the New Haven road as a means of settling a tangled financial transaction engineered while Charles S. Mellen managed the affairs of the road.

Just where this large sum came from is not positively known by anybody but the principals in the transaction. It was paid in settlement of a suit brought by the road against John L. Billard and numerous other defendants, including Mr. Mellen. The sum originally demanded in this suit was \$2,700,000, representing the profit made by Billard and his associates in the purchase of the road from the 112,000 shares of Boston & Maine stock and its sale to the New Haven at a premium of \$25 a share.

Mr. Mellen insists that he paid no part of this settlement money. "Not a five cent piece came from me or was contributed for me so far as I know," he said.

Mr. Billard would not discuss the affair at his home in Meriden, Conn., other than to say that the story of the settlement was correct. The settlement relieves the following named persons of liability charged by the New Haven: Charles S. Mellen, former president of the road; John L. Billard, coal dealer; Edward D. Robbins, former general counsel for the road; Samuel Hemingway, banker, of New Haven, and others whose names were to have been brought into the suit when it came to trial.

The deal is the outgrowth of what is called in stock exchange circles a "wash" transaction. So many stories have been told of its supposed significance during numerous trials involving

the New Haven and its officials that yesterday's transaction, one of the largest cash settlements ever made in a civil suit, is accepted as throwing light upon the probable truth of the affair.

In 1908, when the Massachusetts Legislature declared that ownership of the Boston & Maine road by the New Haven was illegal, Mr. Billard, a close associate of President Mellen, appeared as the purchaser of 112,000 shares of Boston & Maine. This transaction made it possible for New Haven officials to testify that they no longer controlled the Boston & Maine.

Just one year afterward, however, the Massachusetts Legislature decided that the New Haven might continue to control the Boston & Maine if it so desired. Within a few days the directors of the road met, and the New Haven minutes later indicated that the stock had been repurchased at a price that would result in a profit of just \$2,700,000 for holding the securities for twelve months.

In the recent trial of former New Haven officials as violators of the Sherman anti-trust law it was charged that this transaction was not a bona fide one and that Billard acted only as agent for his friend Mellen. Mr. Mellen and his associates solemnly denied that such was the case.

But when the new administration came into control of the road's affairs they decided that the stockholders, who had been compelled to pay this \$2,700,000 commission, had been charged too high a price. The suit that was settled yesterday was the outgrowth of this belief.

## FEMINISTS DECLARE ALIMONY REVOLTING

Radical Leaders Approve Stand of Crystal Eastman.

None of the radical thinking women of the city was surprised yesterday that Crystal Eastman Benedict asked for no alimony when she brought suit for divorce in Chicago on Tuesday.

"Of course, no one would accept money from a divorced husband unless she were a confirmed invalid or had little children to support," said Mrs. James Lees Laidlaw yesterday. "If a woman cannot stand to live with a man, certainly the touch of his money would be intolerable to her. I do not believe in divorce at all unless the conditions are so revolting that a woman cannot endure them any longer; in that case the man's money is just as bad as he is."

This seemed to be the prevailing opinion, and only one feminist voice was raised in defense of alimony. That was the voice of Mrs. Marion B. Cottrill, lawyer and suffragist.

"Marriage under present social conditions robs a woman of every opportunity to develop her own talents," she said. "After a few years she is quite untrained to earn her own living. This is the fault of the husband, who has insisted that she devote herself to him. He certainly should be held financially responsible for his deeds. We can never abolish alimony until we establish economic independence for women. After all, it is no more humiliating for a woman to accept money from a man after a divorce than before it."

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## ADVANCE A STAGE ON SCUTTLE BILL

House Democrats Force Favorable Report by 11 to 8.

## TO GAG DEBATE AND RUSH ACTION

Only Brief Time for Discussion Will Be Allowed—No Amendments Considered.

[From The Tribune Bureau.]

Washington, March 1.—Following their refusal to grant hearings on the Philippines bill yesterday, the Democrats on the Insular Affairs Committee of the House to-day, by a majority of eleven to eight, forced a favorable report on the Philippines bill, just as it passed the Senate, not a single amendment being considered as a result of the announcement of Chairman Jones that the President desired no change to be made in the bill. A special rule will be brought out on the bill in a few days, it was announced, giving a brief time for debate on the measure, after which it will be jammed through.

The Republican members of the committee are indignant at the steamroller methods employed by the Democrats, who were impatient even of the arguments made by the Republicans against the bill in the two brief sessions held by the committee. Altogether there has not been more than three hours' consideration by the committee of the bill since it was received from the Senate, despite the fact that it is an entirely different measure from that proposed in the House at the beginning of the session by Chairman Jones, or the House Committee.

In granting independence within four years, in the discretion of the President, however, the Senate bill, as amended by Senator Clarke, actually meets the views of the Democrats on the House Committee, including Chairman Jones, much better than the original Jones bill did. The Jones bill would have conferred independence when the Philippines were fitted for it, which involved many years of American sovereignty, to say the least.

Under the terms of the present bill, which may be taken for granted, will be passed by the House without change under the whip and spur of the Administration, the islands are granted independence in from two to four years, unless the President shall find conditions justifying him in extending that time to the adjournment of the next Congress after the four year limit expires. Even that discretion vested in the President, no matter what the conditions at the time may be, would prevent the islands being cut adrift after the adjournment of the Congress mentioned unless additional legislation should be passed. The President would have no discretion after that Congress adjourned.

The Administration was particularly anxious to avoid having the Philippines bill go to conference between the two houses after its passage by the House. The reason for this was that the conferees on the part of the Senate, who would be the two ranking Democrats on the Senate Philippines Committee, Senators Hitchcock and Fletcher, and the ranking Republican, Senator McLean, might not agree in conference to the proposition which would suit the President. Two of them, Senators Hitchcock and McLean, voted against the Clarke amendment when it was passed upon by the Senate.

On the other hand, friends of Senator Clarke have been urging the Democrats on the Insular Affairs Committee not to permit any change in the bill whatsoever, because they were not so sure they could hold their lines in the Senate should the measure come back for conference. This urging was scarcely needed by the House scuttlers, however, since they are immensely pleased at the idea of cutting so short the length of time during which American sovereignty over the Philippines will continue.

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## WINS SUIT DAY HE DIES

Nephew of Depew, Injured by Truck, Dead Before Decision Reached Him.

William Paulding, of Yonkers, nephew of Chauncey M. Depew, won a victory in the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court last Saturday in a suit against the Hudson Fuel Company, of Yonkers, for injuries. He died that night.

Paulding, a brother of C. C. Paulding, chief counsel for the New York Central Railroad, was run over by one of the fuel company's coal trucks. He sued for \$15,000 damages, but the jury decided against him, and he was assessed costs. Justice Morschauser decided errors were committed and ordered a new trial, from which the defense appealed to the higher court. The result was the decision in Paulding's favor, which was handed down the day of his death, but did not reach John S. Brennan, his lawyer, until yesterday.

## UNIVERSAL SERVICE URGED BY MITCHEL

Mayor Opens His National Defence Campaign in Toledo.

Toledo, Ohio, March 1.—Universal service and Federal control of the state militia were advocated by Mayor Mitchell of New York in the opening of his campaign for national defence improvement here to-night. Mr. Mitchell was on his way to St. Louis to attend a meeting of Mayors called to formulate a plan to create interest in the need for better defence.

It is generally believed, however, that the union officials will offer a lower scale to-day, after which there will be a general discussion of conditions. It is not believed that an agreement will be reached for several days.

Wilkes-Barre, Penn., March 1.—Wilmington Valley merchants have decided to appeal to anthracite operators and representatives of the United Mine Workers of America to enter into a wage

contract for a period longer than two years.

It is asserted that business conditions are greatly disturbed because of uncertainty over the new contract, and merchants incur heavy losses. The merchants will send a committee to New York to urge both sides to enter into an agreement for a period of at least four years.

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## COAL MINERS DEMAND 3 TO 5-CENT RAISE

Operators Refuse, but Conference Will Continue To-day.

Demands for a varying scale of increased wages for miners in the various bituminous coal producing states brought about a temporary deadlock yesterday between union officials and mine operators.

The demand was the first specific statement the men have made on the wage proposition. Heretofore their negotiations at the Hotel McAlpin conferences have had to do exclusively with working conditions. The miners asked for an increase of 5.39 cents a ton in Western Pennsylvania and 3 cents each in Illinois, Indiana and Ohio.

Illinois operators, who are said to be unwilling to grant any increase at all, were the first to announce their unwillingness to meet the demanded price. The other operators immediately followed suit. The miners, however, insisted that they would not agree to accept anything lower than the figures named.

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